Claims:

1-7. Canceled.

8. (previously presented) A refractory article for guiding or conveying a solidified material comprising vitreous silica impregnated with a carbonaceous material.

9. (previously presented) The refractory article according to claim 8, wherein the article comprises 1 to 6 wt. % of carbonaceous material.

10. (previously presented) The refractory article of claim 8, wherein the refractory article comprises from 75 to 96 wt. % of vitreous silica, from 2 to 23 wt. % of chemical binder, and from 2 to 4 wt. % of water.

11. (previously presented) The refractory article of claim 10, wherein the chemical binder is selected from a group consisting of calcium aluminate, calcium silicate, polyalkoxysiloxanes, colloidal silica, zirconium acetate, magnesium acetate, magnesium oxide an mixtures thereof.

12. (previously presented) The refractory article of claim 8, wherein the refractory article is sintered and comprises at least 60 wt. % amorphous silica.

13. (previously presented) The refractory article of claim 12, wherein the refractory article comprises more than 90 wt. % amorphous silica.

14. (previously presented) A process for the preparation of a refractory article comprising vitreous silica impregnated with a carbonaceous material, the process comprising impregnating a vitreous silica basis with a carbonaceous material.

15. (previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein impregnation occurs by heating.

16. (previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein impregnation occurs

under pressure.

17. (previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein impregnation is followed by cracking the impregnated carbonaceous material.

18. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~14~~ 17, wherein cracking occurs by heating.

19. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~14~~ 17, wherein cracking occurs under pressure.

20. (previously presented) A refractory article for guiding or conveying a solidified material comprising 75 wt.% vitreous silica including at least 60 wt.% amorphous silica impregnated with 1-6 wt.% carbonaceous material, and from 2 to 23 wt. % of chemical binder selected from a group consisting of calcium aluminate, calcium silicate, polyalkoxysiloxanes, colloidal silica, zirconium acetate, magnesium acetate, magnesium oxide an mixtures thereof.